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1. (Three times Amended) A power supply apparatus for a vehicle, comprising:

an electric power line comprising a plurality of sequentially connected segments wired in an interior of a vehicle from a battery, for supplying power to various kinds of loads of said vehicle via a plurality of modules which are connected to receive electric power via respective segments of said electric power line;

a semiconductor switching element connected between each respective segment and a load supplied by said segment for controlling electric power to said load;

a plurality of short sensors for detecting a short circuit in at least one of said plurality of segments of said electric power line, said at least one segment connecting respective modules;

a power supply shutdown means connected in series with each segment of said electric power line connecting respective modules, said power supply shutdown means being connected in series with said semiconductor switching element to supply electric power to said semiconductor switching means;

a control circuit for specifying a short circuited segment of said electric power line in accordance with a short detection condition of said plurality of short sensors; and

means responsive to signals from said control circuit for cutting off the power supply cutoff means, and removing the short circuited segment from said electric power line for supplying power to said loads.

11. (Twice Amended) A load control module of an electric power supply apparatus for a vehicle, said load control module comprising:

a communication circuit which is connectable to at least one other module of said power supply apparatus through a communication line;

a control circuit for outputting a load control signal in accordance with a signal which is inputted through said communication circuit;

a drive circuit connected to an electric power line that is coupled between said modules, for controlling a power supply to a load of said vehicle in accordance with an output signal from said control circuit; and

a relay for opening and closing a connection that branches from said power line to a particular load as a

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function of an output from said control circuit, said relay opening and closing in response to load control signals output from said control circuit.

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(Applicant's Remarks are set forth hereinbelow, starting on the following page.)